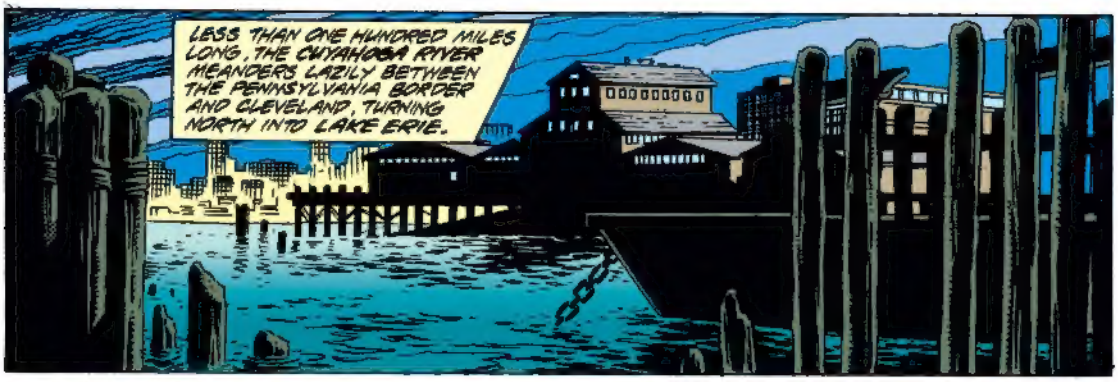
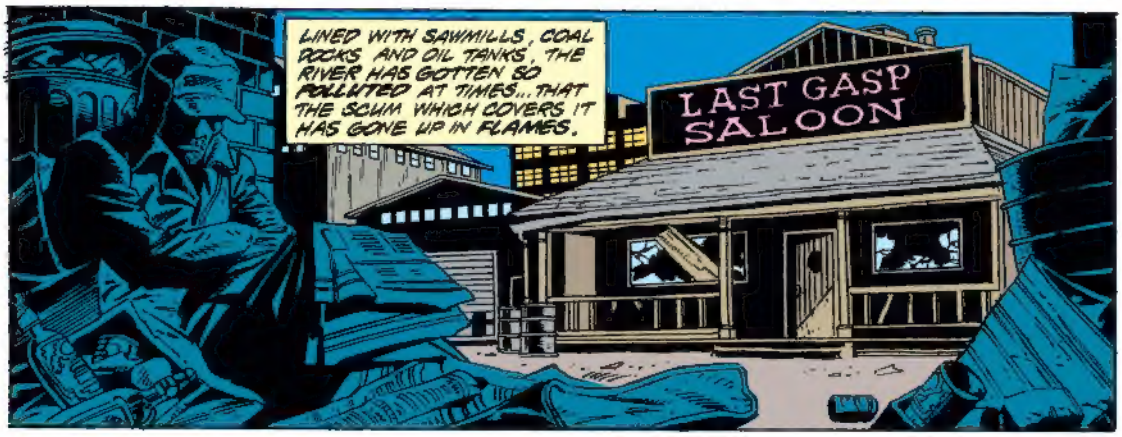
MARVEL COMICS
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
GUEST-STARRING:
WOLVERINE
$1.50 US
$2.05 CAN
395
DEC
02462
PAYBACK!

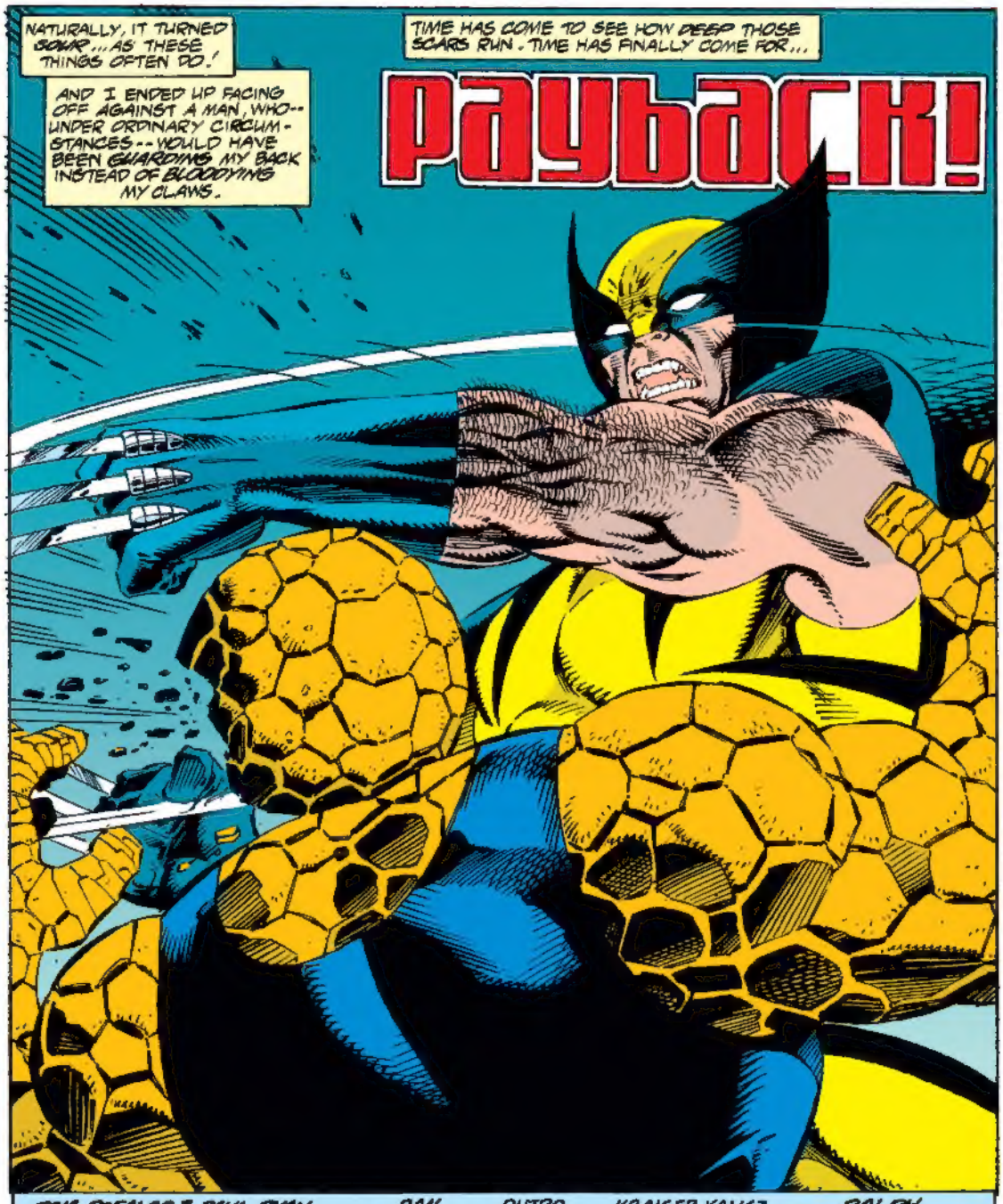

LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED MILES LONG, THE CUYAHOGA RIVER MEANDERS LAZILY BETWEEN THE PENNSYLVANIA BORDER AND CLEVELAND, TURNING NORTH INTO LAKE ERIE.


LINED WITH SAWMILLS, COAL DOCKS AND OIL TANKS, THE RIVER HAS GOTTEN SO POLLUTED AT TIMES... THAT THE SCUM WHICH COVERS IT HAS GONE UP IN FLAMES.
LAST GASP SALOON

A RIVER CATCHING FIRE?
TALK ABOUT AN OFF-DAY!
I SHOULD BE THE LAST TO CRITICIZE...

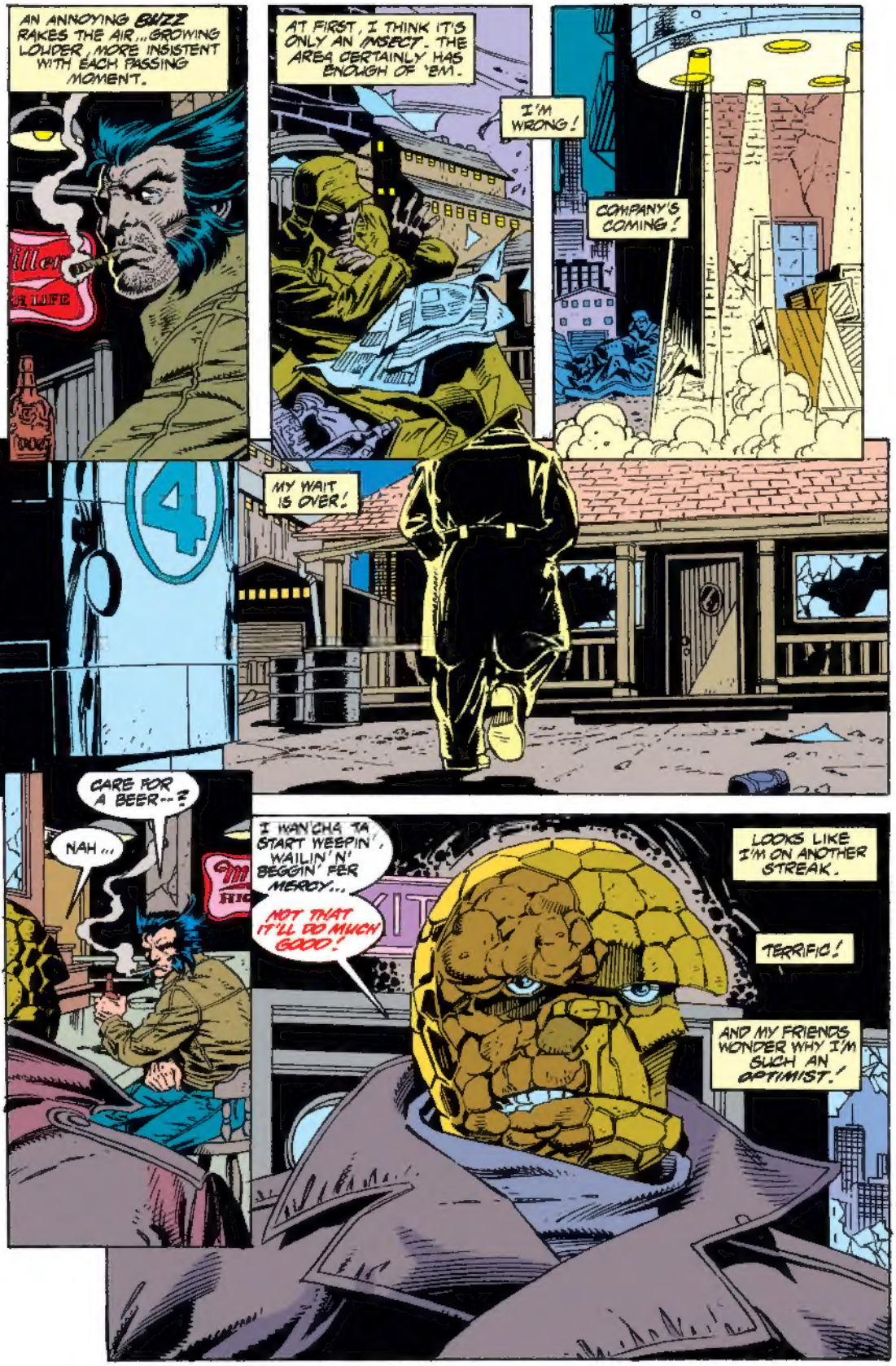
MY OFF-STREAKS USUALLY RUN LONGER THAN A POLITICIAN'S SPEECH--
-- WITH DEADLIER RESULTS!
ONE IN PARTICULAR HAS BEEN GNAWING AT MY GUT, LIKE A HUNGRY PIT-BULL ON A MUGGER'S LEG.
IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE, EASY MISSION.

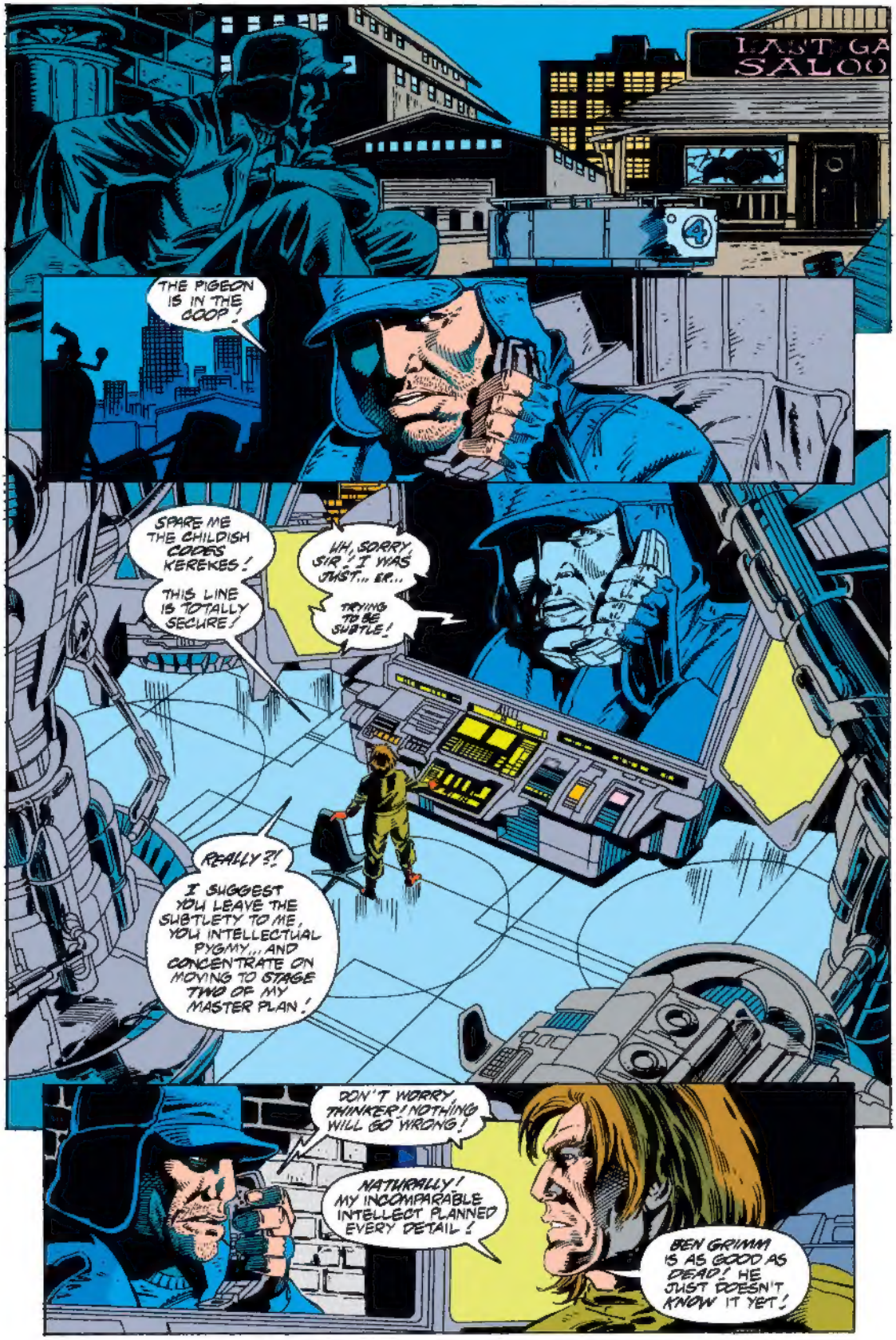
~~REED RICHARDS, MISTER FANTASTIC!~~ BEN GRIMM, THE THING! SUE RICHARDS, INVISIBLE WOMAN! JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH! TRANSFORMED BY AN ACCIDENT IN OUTER SPACE INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN, THEY VOWED TO USE THEIR AWESOME POWERS TO HELP MANKIND CHART THE UNKNOWN. STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

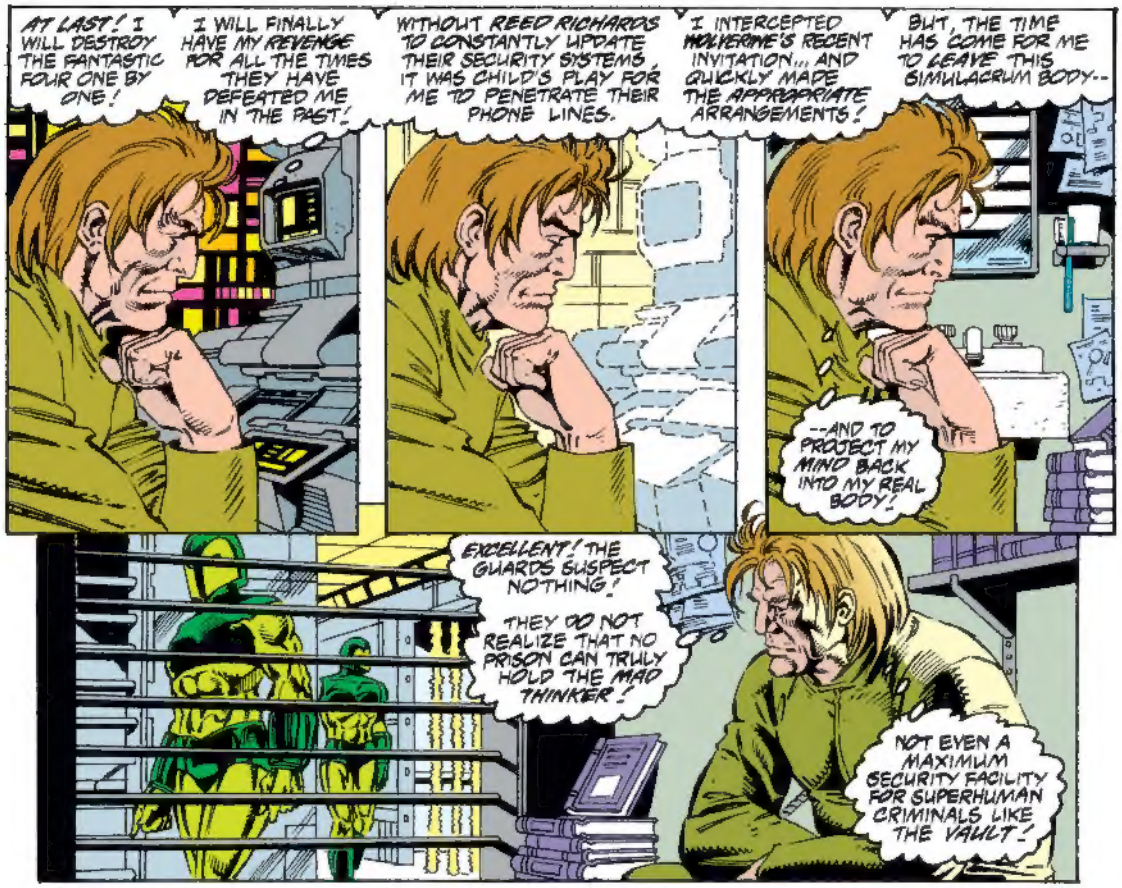

NATURALLY, IT TURNED SOUR...AS THESE THINGS OFTEN DO.
AND I ENDED UP FACING OFF AGAINST A MAN, WHO-- UNDER ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES--WOULD HAVE BEEN GUARDING MY BACK INSTEAD OF BLOODYING MY CLAWS.
TIME HAS COME TO SEE HOW DEEP THOSE SCARS RUN. TIME HAS FINALLY COME FOR...
payback!

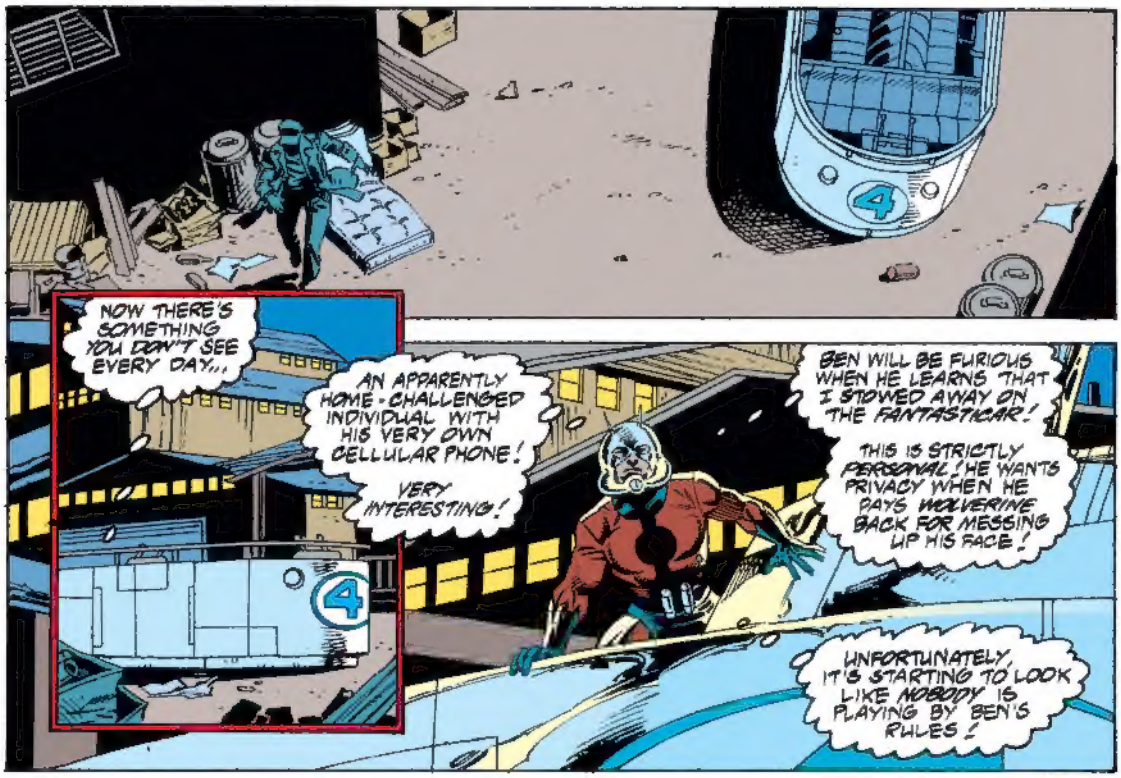
TOM DEFALCO & PAUL RYAN SCRIPT, PLOT AND PENCILS | DAN BULANADI INKS | DUTRO & POWELL LETTERS | KRAIGER, KALISZ & CAPONGACCO COLORS | RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR

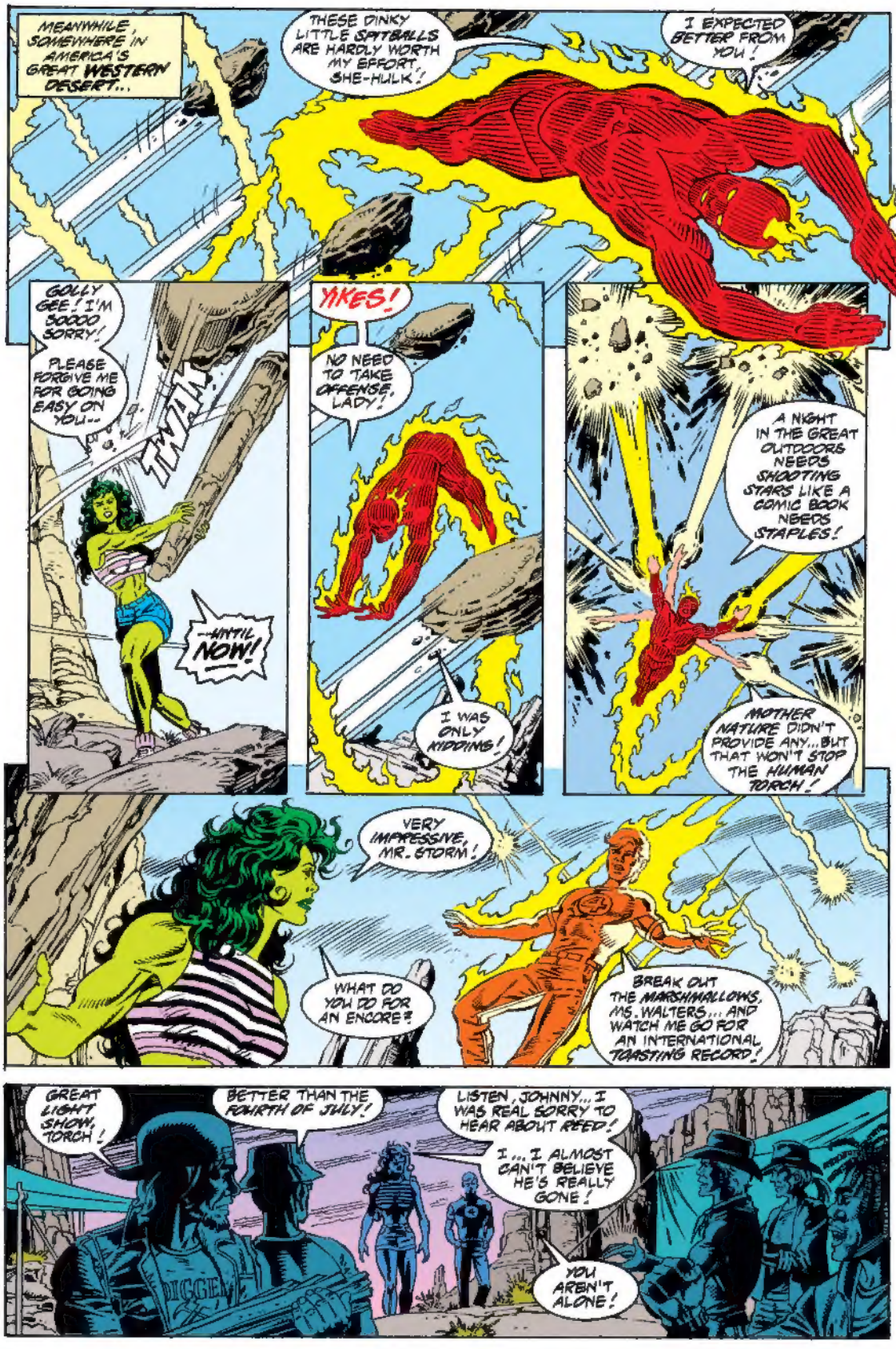
© 2013 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW. MARVEL.COM


AN ANNOYING BUZZ RAKES THE AIR... GROWING LOUDER, MORE INSISTENT WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.
AT FIRST, I THINK IT'S ONLY AN INSECT. THE AREA CERTAINLY HAS ENOUGH OF 'EM.
I'M WRONG!
COMPANY'S COMING!
MY WAIT IS OVER!
CARE FOR A BEER--?
NAH...
I WANCHA TA START WEEPIN', WAILIN' N' BEGGIN' FER MERCY...
NOT THAT IT'LL DO MUCH GOOD!
LOOKS LIKE I'M ON ANOTHER STREAK.
TERRIFIC!
AND MY FRIENDS WONDER WHY I'M SUCH AN OPTIMIST.

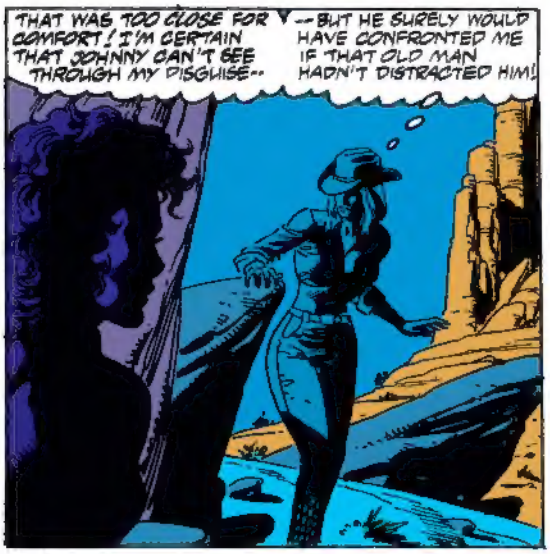

LAST GA
SALOO
4
THE PIGEON IS IN THE COOP!
SPARE ME THE CHILDISH CODES KEREKES!
THIS LINE IS TOTALLY SECURE!
UH, SORRY, SIR! I WAS JUST... ER...
TRYING TO BE SUBTLE!
REALLY?!
I SUGGEST YOU LEAVE THE SUBTLETY TO ME, YOU INTELLECTUAL PYGMY... AND CONCENTRATE ON MOVING TO STAGE TWO OF MY MASTER PLAN!
DON'T WORRY, THINKER! NOTHING WILL GO WRONG!
NATURALLY! MY INCOMPARABLE INTELLECT PLANNED EVERY DETAIL!
BEN GRIMM IS AS GOOD AS DEAD! HE JUST DOESN'T KNOW IT YET!


AT LAST! I WILL DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR ONE BY ONE!
I WILL FINALLY HAVE MY REVENGE FOR ALL THE TIMES THEY HAVE DEFEATED ME IN THE PAST!
WITHOUT REED RICHARDS TO CONSTANTLY UPDATE THEIR SECURITY SYSTEMS, IT WAS CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME TO PENETRATE THEIR PHONE LINES.
I INTERCEPTED WOLVERINE'S RECENT INVITATION... AND QUICKLY MADE THE APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENTS!
BUT, THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO LEAVE THIS SIMULACRUM BODY--
--AND TO PROJECT MY MIND BACK INTO MY REAL BODY!
EXCELLENT! THE GUARDS SUSPECT NOTHING!
THEY DO NOT REALIZE THAT NO PRISON CAN TRULY HOLD THE MAD THINKER!
NOT EVEN A MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY FOR SUPERHUMAN CRIMINALS LIKE THE VAULT!

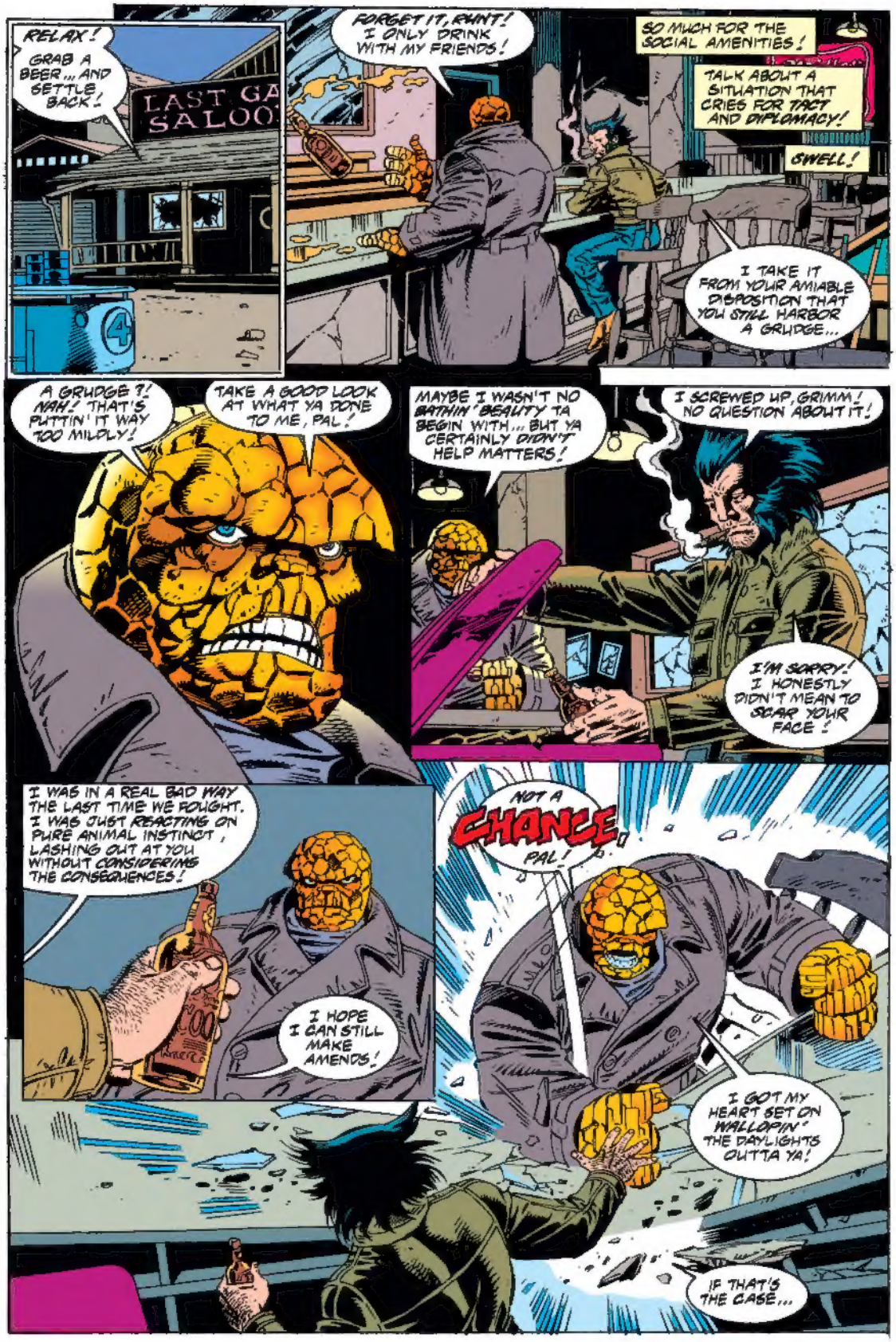

4
NOW THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY...
AN APPARENTLY HOME-CHALLENGED INDIVIDUAL WITH HIS VERY OWN CELLULAR PHONE!
VERY INTERESTING!
BEN WILL BE FURIOUS WHEN HE LEARNS THAT I STOWED AWAY ON THE FANTASTICAR!
THIS IS STRICTLY PERSONAL! HE WANTS PRIVACY WHEN HE PAYS WOLVERINE BACK FOR MESSING UP HIS FACE!
UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE NOBODY IS PLAYING BY BEN'S RULES!

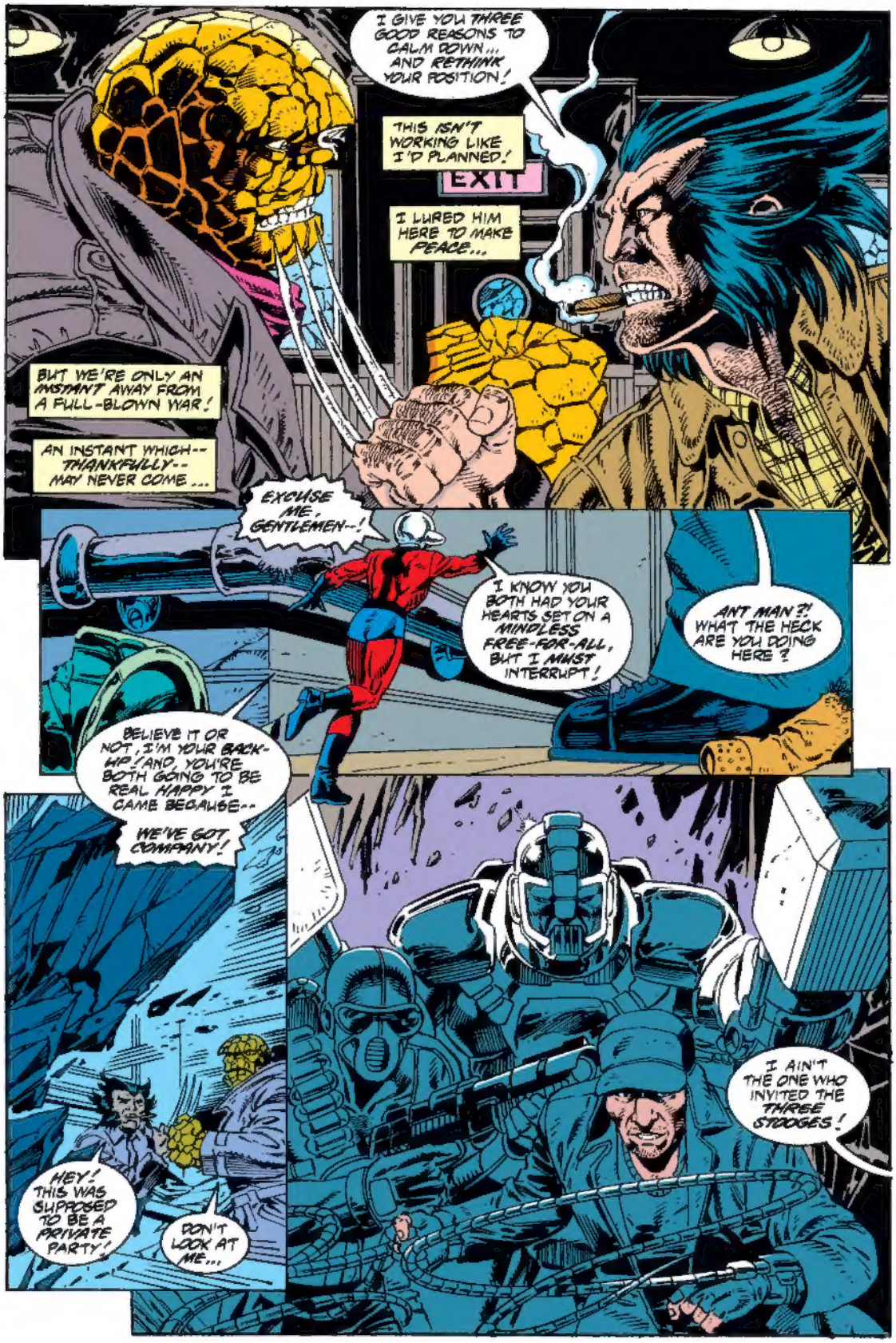

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA'S GREAT WESTERN DESERT...
THESE DINKY LITTLE SPITBALLS ARE HARDLY WORTH MY EFFORT, SHE-HULK!
I EXPECTED BETTER FROM YOU!
GOLLY GEE! I'M SOOOO SORRY!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR GOING EASY ON YOU...
--UNTIL NOW!
YIKES!
NO NEED TO TAKE OFFENSE, LADY!
I WAS ONLY KIDDING!
A NIGHT IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS NEEDS SHOOTING STARS LIKE A COMIC BOOK NEEDS STAPLES!
MOTHER NATURE DIDN'T PROVIDE ANY...BUT THAT WON'T STOP THE HUMAN TORCH!
VERY IMPRESSIVE, MR. STORM!
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR AN ENCORE?
BREAK OUT THE MARSHMALLOWS, MS. WALTERS... AND WATCH ME GO FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TOASTING RECORD!
GREAT LIGHT SHOW, TORCH!
BETTER THAN THE FOURTH OF JULY!
LISTEN, JOHNNY... I WAS REAL SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT REED!
I... I ALMOST CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S REALLY GONE!
YOU AREN'T ALONE!

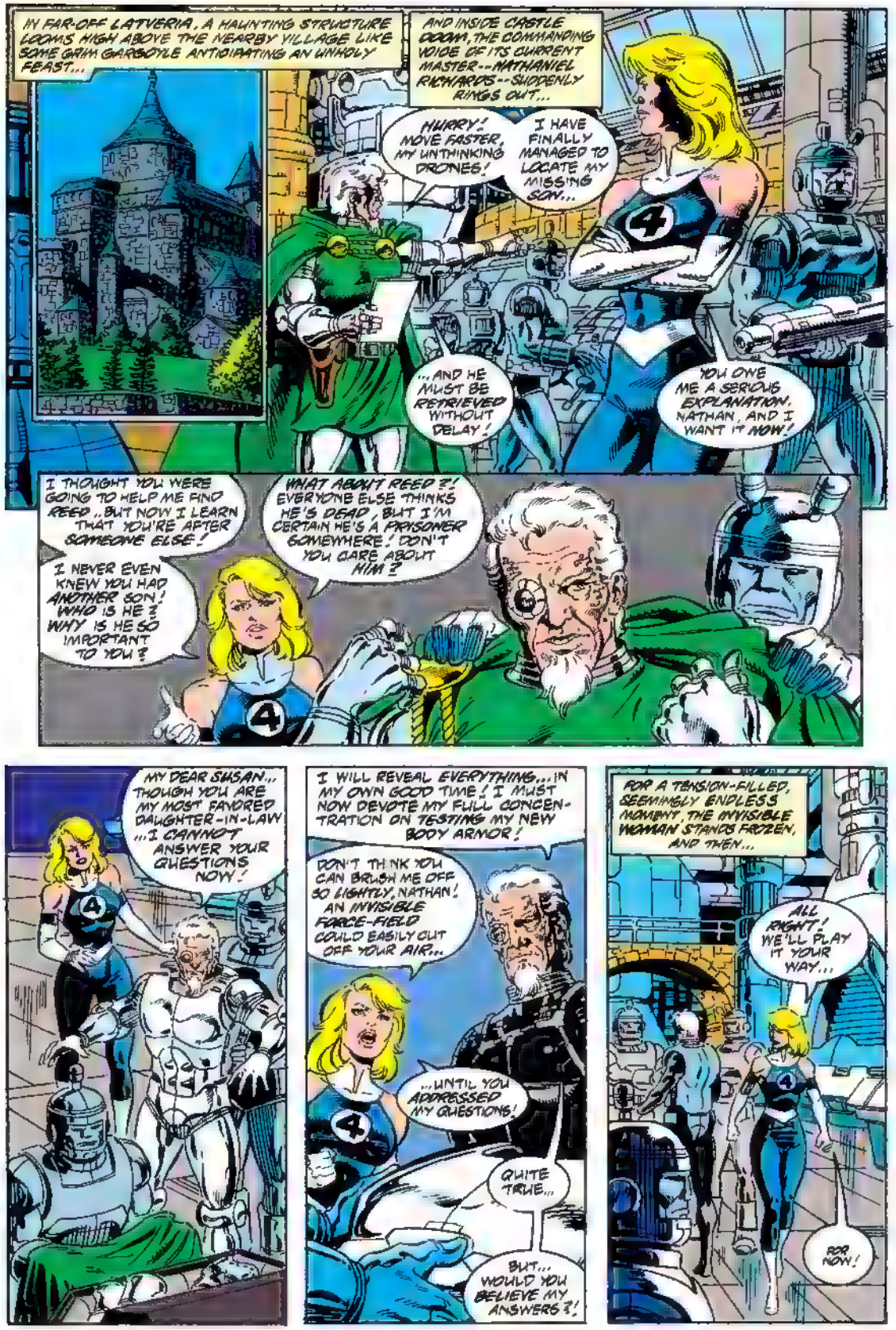
LOOK, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO... I'M EVEN WILLING TO REJOIN THE FF AS A TEMPORARY MEMBER...AT LEAST UNTIL YOU FIND A PERMANENT REPLACEMENT!
I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE TALKING TO THE RIGHT PERSON, JEN...
I WENT ON THIS VACATION TO GET AWAY FROM THE TEAM--
--AND I'M NOT CONVINCED I'M GOING BACK!
LOOK SHARP, JUNIOR! THERE'S THE LADY YOU'VE BEEN SO ANXIOUS TO MEET!
UH, JENNIFER... I HATE TO BE RUDE, BUT...
NO PROBLEM! I'LL CATCH YOU LATER!
I'M LUCKY SHE-HULK IS SO UNDERSTANDING! THERE'S SOMETHING REALLY INTRIGUING ABOUT THAT BLONDE, AND--OH, NO!
COULD I HAVE A WORD, MR. STORM?
I'M AFRAID I'M IN A BIT OF A HURRY, PROFESSOR JANSON!
THIS WON'T TAKE LONG! I JUST WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE WAY I ACTED YESTERDAY... WHEN YOU SAVED MY LIFE!
UH... SURE...
NO PROBLEM!

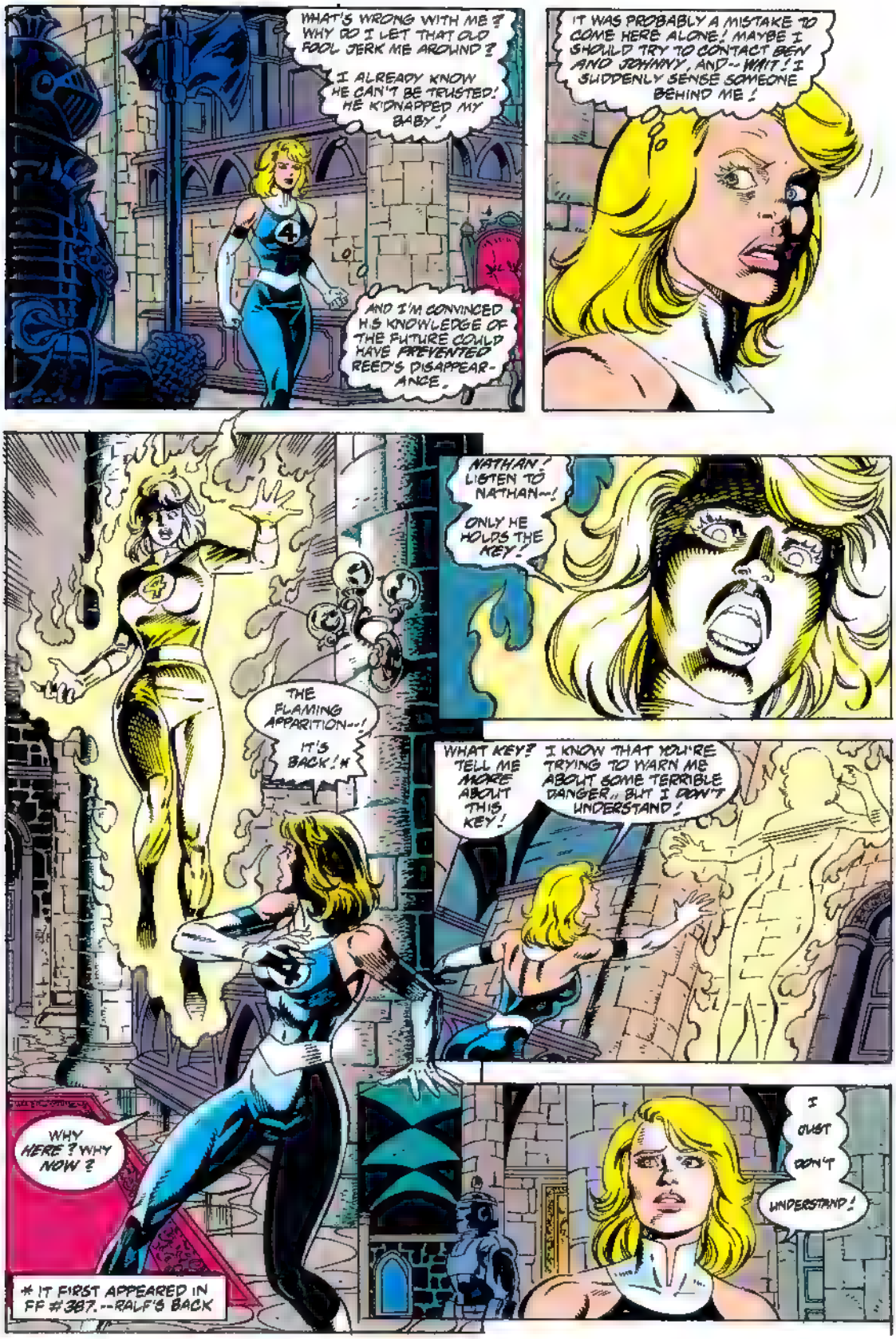

THAT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT! I'M CERTAIN THAT JOHNNY CAN'T SEE THROUGH MY DISGUISE--
--BUT HE SURELY WOULD HAVE CONFRONTED ME IF THAT OLD MAN HADN'T DISTRACTED HIM!

WELL, WELL... SO IT'S FINALLY HERSELF, IS IT?
MY NAME IS BRIDGET O'NEIL, AND IT'S HIGH TIME WE HAD OURSELVES A LITTLE CHAT!
THIS IS THE WOMAN WHO INVITED THE TORCH HERE... AND OBVIOUSLY HAS DESIGNS ON HIM! WHAT IS HER INTEREST IN ME?

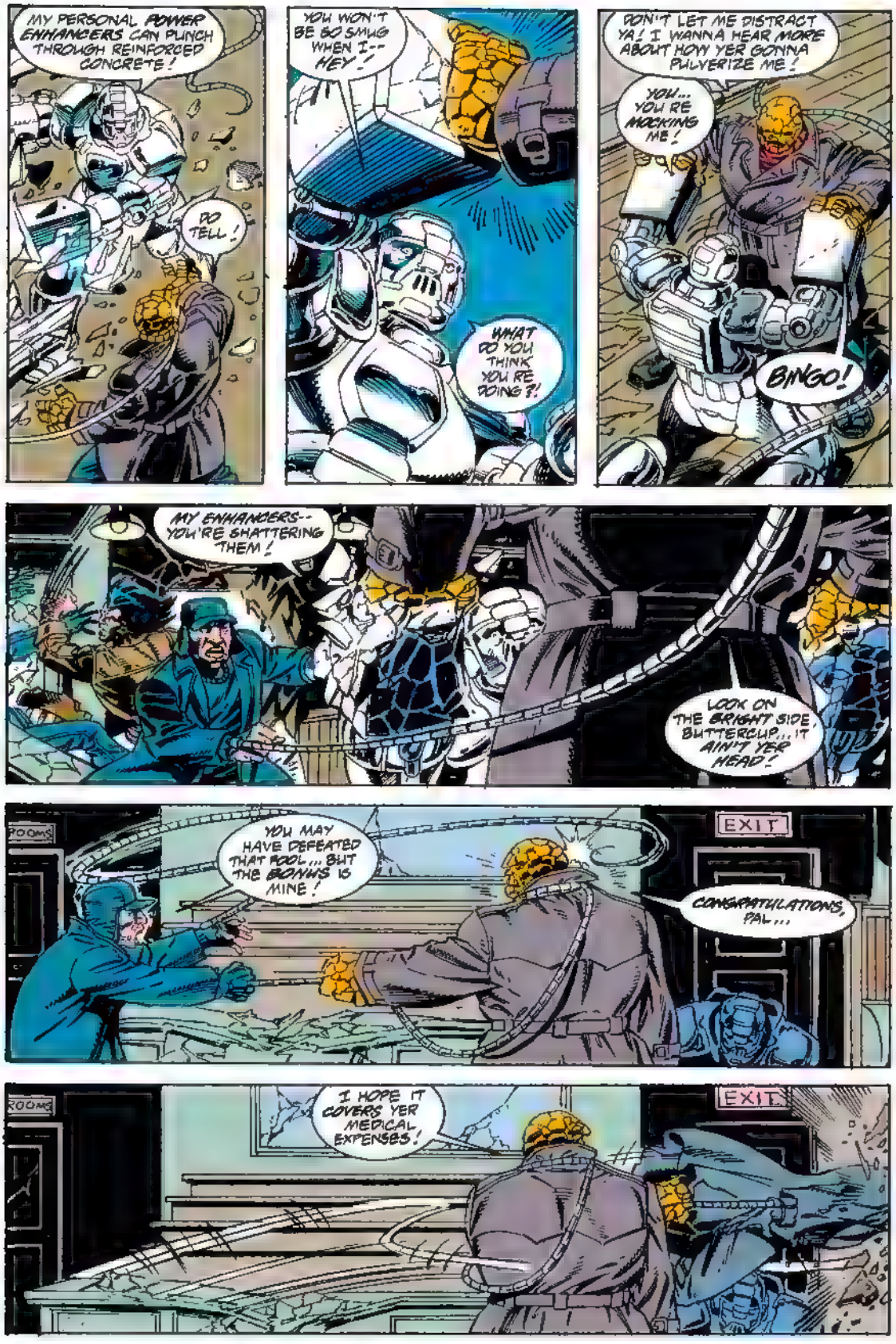

RELAX! GRAB A BEER... AND SETTLE BACK!
LAST GA SALOO
4
FORGET IT, RHINT! I ONLY DRINK WITH MY FRIENDS!
SO MUCH FOR THE SOCIAL AMENITIES!
TALK ABOUT A SITUATION THAT CRIES FOR TACT AND DIPLOMACY!
SWELL!
I TAKE IT FROM YOUR AMIABLE DISPOSITION THAT YOU STILL HARBOR A GRUDGE...
A GRUDGE?! NAH! THAT'S PUTTIN' IT WAY TOO MILDLY!
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT WHAT YA DONE TO ME, PAL!
MAYBE I WASN'T NO BATHIN' BEAUTY TA BEGIN WITH... BUT YA CERTAINLY DIDN'T HELP MATTERS!
I SCREWED UP, GRIMM! NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!
I'M SORRY! I HONESTLY DIDN'T MEAN TO SCAR YOUR FACE!
I WAS IN A REAL BAD WAY THE LAST TIME WE FOUGHT. I WAS JUST REACTING ON PURE ANIMAL INSTINCT, LASHING OUT AT YOU WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES!
I HOPE I CAN STILL MAKE AMENDS!
NOT A CHANCE, PAL!
I GOT MY HEART SET ON WALLOPIN' THE DAYLIGHTS OUTTA YA!
IF THAT'S THE CASE...


I GIVE YOU THREE GOOD REASONS TO CALM DOWN... AND RETHINK YOUR POSITION!
THIS ISN'T WORKING LIKE I'D PLANNED!
EXIT
I LURED HIM HERE TO MAKE PEACE...
BUT WE'RE ONLY AN INSTANT AWAY FROM A FULL-BLOWN WAR!
AN INSTANT WHICH-- THANKFULLY-- MAY NEVER COME...
EXCUSE ME, GENTLEMEN--!
I KNOW YOU BOTH HAD YOUR HEARTS SET ON A MINDLESS FREE-FOR-ALL, BUT I MUST INTERRUPT!
ANT MAN?! WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING HERE?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'M YOUR BACK-UP! AND, YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO BE REAL HAPPY I CAME BECAUSE--
WE'VE GOT COMPANY!
I AIN'T THE ONE WHO INVITED THE THREE STOOGES!
HEY! THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A PRIVATE PARTY!
DON'T LOOK AT ME...

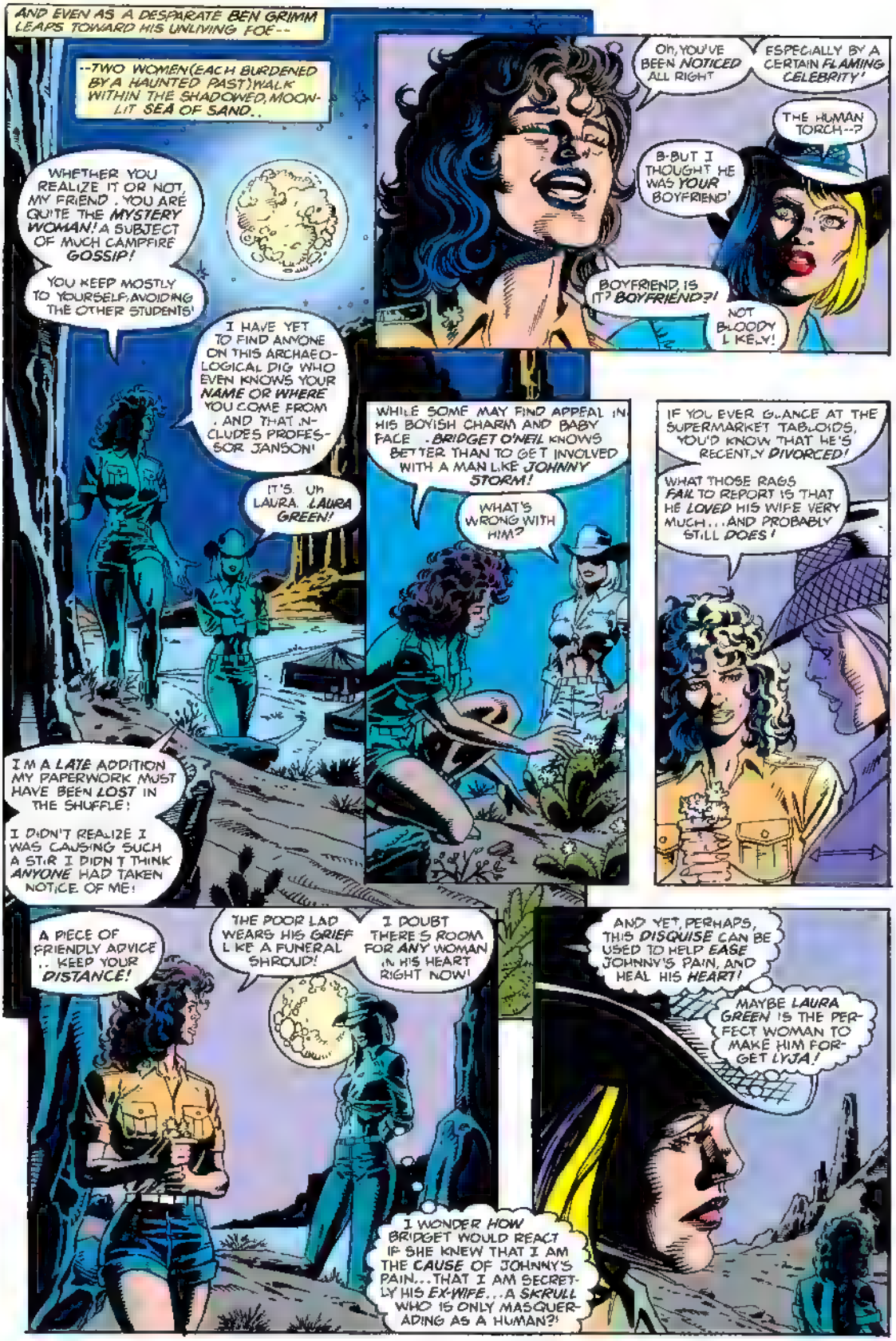

IN FAR-OFF LATVERIA, A HAUNTING STRUCTURE LOOMS HIGH ABOVE THE NEARBY VILLAGE LIKE SOME GRIM GARGOYLE ANTICIPATING AN UNHOLY FEAST...
AND INSIDE CASTLE DOOM, THE COMMANDING VOICE OF ITS CURRENT MASTER--NATHANIEL RICHARDS--SUDDENLY RINGS OUT...
HURRY! MOVE FASTER, MY UNTHINKING DRONES!
I HAVE FINALLY MANAGED TO LOCATE MY MISSING SON...
...AND HE MUST BE RETRIEVED WITHOUT DELAY!
YOU OWE ME A SERIOUS EXPLANATION, NATHAN, AND I WANT IT NOW!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO HELP ME FIND REED...BUT NOW I LEARN THAT YOU'RE AFTER SOMEONE ELSE!
I NEVER EVEN KNEW YOU HAD ANOTHER SON! WHO IS HE? WHY IS HE SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?
WHAT ABOUT REED?! EVERYONE ELSE THINKS HE'S DEAD, BUT I'M CERTAIN HE'S A PRISONER SOMEWHERE! DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT HIM?
MY DEAR SUSAN... THOUGH YOU ARE MY MOST FAVORED DAUGHTER-IN-LAW ...I CANNOT ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS NOW!
I WILL REVEAL EVERYTHING...IN MY OWN GOOD TIME! I MUST NOW DEVOTE MY FULL CONCENTRATION ON TESTING MY NEW BODY ARMOR!
DON'T THINK YOU CAN BRUSH ME OFF SO LIGHTLY, NATHAN! AN INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD COULD EASILY CUT OFF YOUR AIR...
...UNTIL YOU ADDRESSED MY QUESTIONS!
QUITE TRUE...
BUT... WOULD YOU BELIEVE MY ANSWERS?!
FOR A TENSION-FILLED, SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MOMENT, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN STANDS FROZEN, AND THEN...
ALL RIGHT! WE'LL PLAY IT YOUR WAY...
FOR NOW!

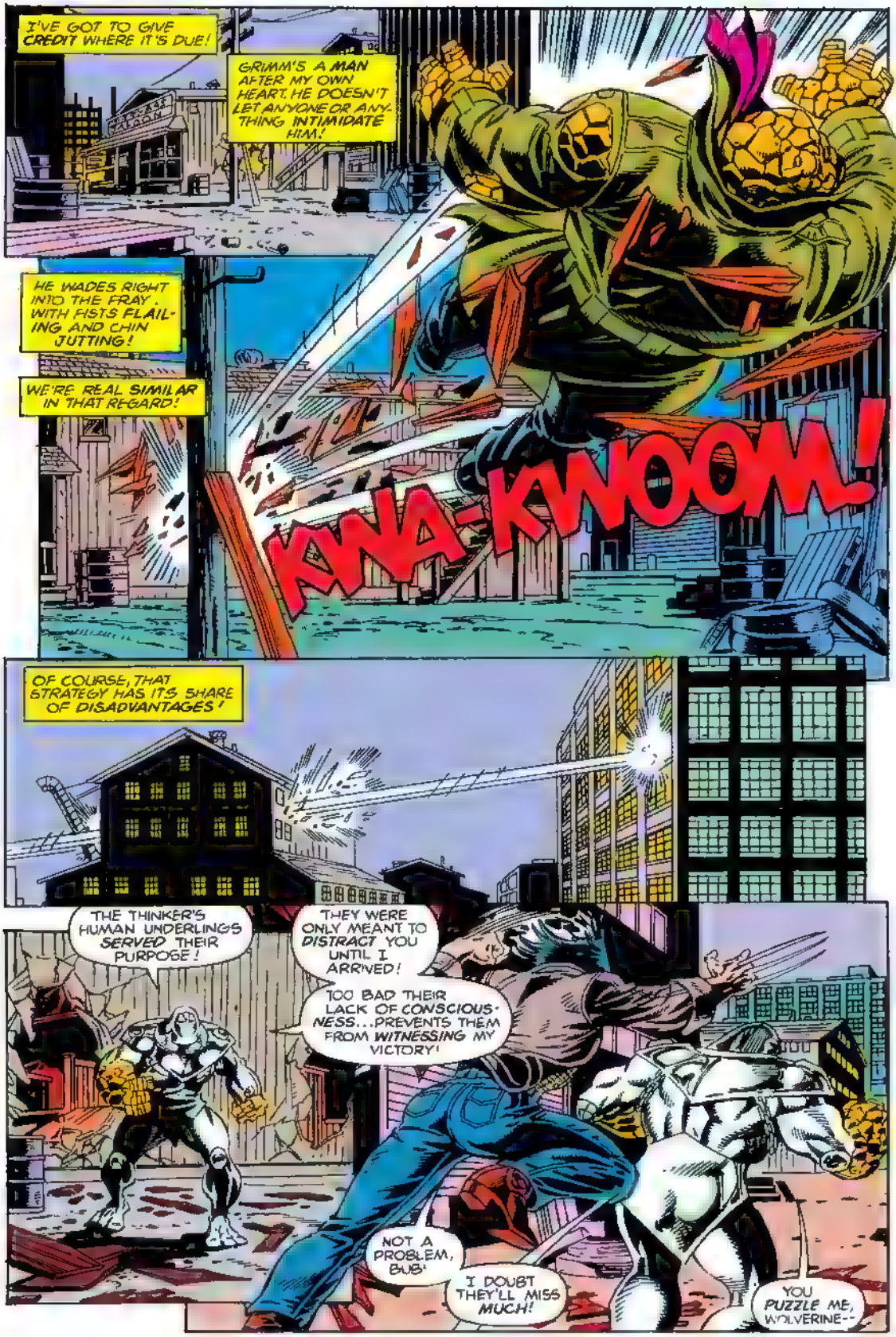

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? WHY DO I LET THAT OLD FOOL JERK ME AROUND?
I ALREADY KNOW HE CAN'T BE TRUSTED! HE KIDNAPPED MY BABY!
AND I'M CONVINCED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE COULD HAVE PREVENTED REED'S DISAPPEARANCE.
IT WAS PROBABLY A MISTAKE TO COME HERE ALONE! MAYBE I SHOULD TRY TO CONTACT BEN AND JOHNNY, AND--WAIT! I SUDDENLY SENSE SOMEONE BEHIND ME!
NATHAN! LISTEN TO NATHAN--!
ONLY HE HOLDS THE KEY!
THE FLAMING APPARITION--! IT'S BACK!*
WHAT KEY? TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS KEY!
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO WARN ME ABOUT SOME TERRIBLE DANGER... BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WHY HERE? WHY NOW?
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!
* IT FIRST APPEARED IN FF #387.--RALF'S BACK

MEANWHILE...
CAN'T YOU GUYS COME BACK LATER?
YER INTERRUPTIN' A PERSONAL CONVERSATION!
EXIT
HIGH LIFE
UH...SORRY... BUT WE WERE GIVEN RATHER PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS!
BOY, DO I FEEL USEFUL!
WHAT GOOD IS THE ANT MAN...WHEN YOU ALREADY HAVE FIRST-STRINGERS LIKE WOLVERINE AND THE EVER-LOVING THING?!
I GOT HIM! I SNAGGED THE THING!
BACK OFF, KEREKES!
THE MAD THINKER OFFERED A BONUS TO THE MAN WHO BAGS HIM--AND I AIM TO COLLECT!
THE THINKER, HUH?
CONSIDERING HIS PAST HISTORY WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR, IT MAKES SENSE HE'D PAY A BOUNTY ON GRIMM--
--BUT WHAT'S HE OFFERING FOR ME?!
ACTUALLY... YOU'RE INCLUDED IN THE BASIC JOB!
WHAT?! DOESN'T HE REALIZE THAT I'M AN X-MAN? THAT OUGHT TO RATE SOME KIND OF PREMIUM!

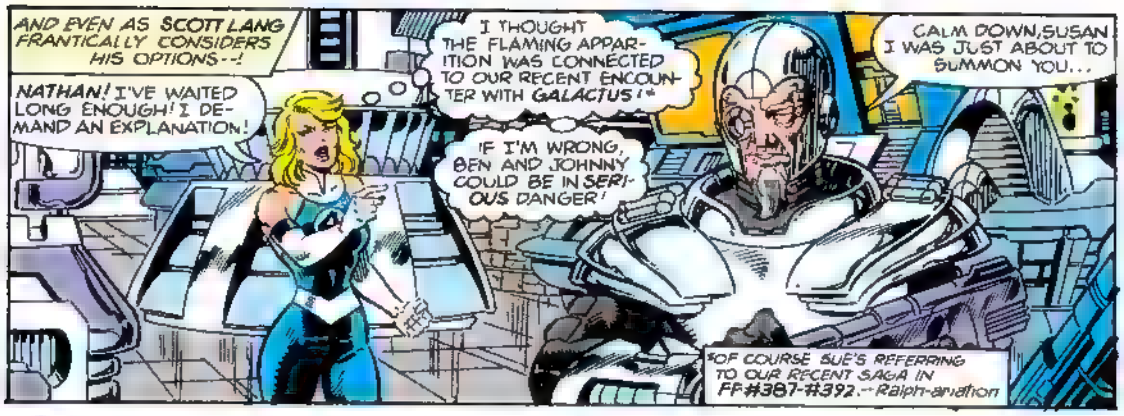

MY PERSONAL POWER ENHANCERS CAN PUNCH THROUGH REINFORCED CONCRETE!
DO TELL!
YOU WON'T BE SO SMUG WHEN I-- HEY!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
DON'T LET ME DISTRACT YA! I WANNA HEAR MORE ABOUT HOW YER GONNA PULVERIZE ME!
YOU... YOU'RE MOCKING ME!
BINGO!
MY ENHANCERS-- YOU'RE SHATTERING THEM!
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, BUTTERCUP... IT AIN'T YER HEAD!
ROOMS
YOU MAY HAVE DEFEATED THAT FOOL... BUT THE BONUS IS MINE!
EXIT
CONGRATULATIONS, PAL...
ROOMS
I HOPE IT COVERS YER MEDICAL EXPENSES!
EXIT

I'VE READ THE MAD THINKER'S DOSSIER!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D RELY ON LOSERS LIKE THESE!
IT'S GOT TO BE A JOKE... RIGHT?
MAYBE--
KA TWAK
--BUT I AIN'T LAUGHIN'!
RESTROOMS
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS WACKY ARM--?
GREETINGS! I AM THE THINKER'S SUPER ANDROID, MODEL F-4!
AND I HAVE COME TO FACILITATE YOUR DESTRUCTION!
MUST I STATE THE OBVIOUS?
NAH! EVEN A MENTAL MIDGET CAN SEE THAT YA GOT ALLA THE FF'S POWERS!

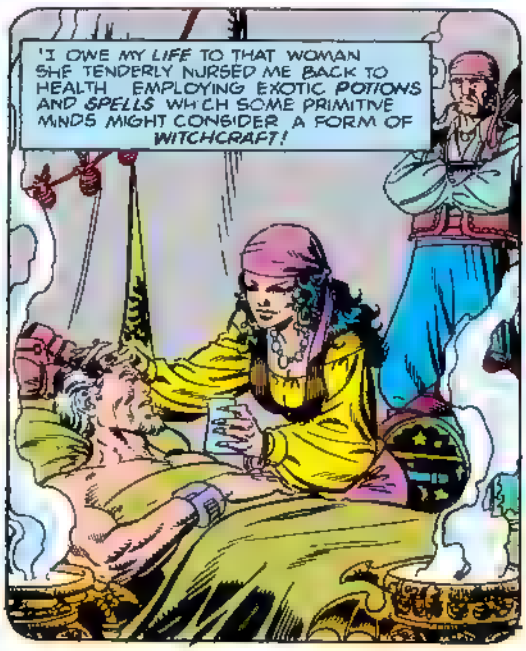

AND EVEN AS A DESPARATE BEN GRIMM LEAPS TOWARD HIS UNLIVING FOE--
--TWO WOMEN(EACH BURDENED BY A HAUNTED PAST)WALK WITHIN THE SHADOWED,MOON-LIT SEA OF SAND..
WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT, MY FRIEND . YOU ARE QUITE THE MYSTERY WOMAN! A SUBJECT OF MUCH CAMPFIRE GOSSIP!
YOU KEEP MOSTLY TO YOURSELF,AVOIDING THE OTHER STUDENTS!
I HAVE YET TO FIND ANYONE ON THIS ARCHAEO-LOGICAL DIG WHO EVEN KNOWS YOUR NAME OR WHERE YOU COME FROM . AND THAT .N-CLUDES PROFES-SOR JANSON!
IT'S. Uh LAURA. LAURA GREEN!
I'M A LATE ADDITION MY PAPERWORK MUST HAVE BEEN LOST IN THE SHUFFLE!
I DIDN'T REALIZE I WAS CAUSING SUCH A STIR I DIDN T THINK ANYONE HAD TAKEN NOTICE OF ME!
Oh, YOU'VE BEEN NOTICED ALL RIGHT
ESPECIALLY BY A CERTAIN FLAMING CELEBRITY!
THE HUMAN TORCH--?
B-BUT I THOUGHT HE WAS YOUR BOYFRIEND!
BOYFRIEND, IS IT? BOYFRIEND?!
NOT BLOODY LIKELY!
WHILE SOME MAY FIND APPEAL IN HIS BOYISH CHARM AND BABY FACE . BRIDGET O'NEIL KNOWS BETTER THAN TO GET INVOLVED WITH A MAN LIKE JOHNNY STORM!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
IF YOU EVER GLANCE AT THE SUPERMARKET TABLOIDS, YOU'D KNOW THAT HE'S RECENTLY DIVORCED!
WHAT THOSE RAGS FAIL TO REPORT IS THAT HE LOVED HIS WIFE VERY MUCH...AND PROBABLY STILL DOES!
A PIECE OF FRIENDLY ADVICE .. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!
THE POOR LAD WEARS HIS GRIEF LIKE A FUNERAL SHROUD!
I DOUBT THERE'S ROOM FOR ANY WOMAN IN HIS HEART RIGHT NOW!
AND YET, PERHAPS, THIS DISGUISE CAN BE USED TO HELP EASE JOHNNY'S PAIN, AND HEAL HIS HEART!
MAYBE LAURA GREEN IS THE PER-FECT WOMAN TO MAKE HIM FOR-GET LYJA!
I WONDER HOW BRIDGET WOULD REACT IF SHE KNEW THAT I AM THE CAUSE OF JOHNNY'S PAIN...THAT I AM SECRET-LY HIS EX-WIFE...A SKRULL WHO IS ONLY MASQUER-ADING AS A HUMAN?!


I'VE GOT TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE!
GRIMM'S A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART. HE DOESN'T LET ANYONE OR ANYTHING INTIMIDATE HIM!
HE WADES RIGHT INTO THE FRAY WITH FISTS FLAILING AND CHIN JUTTING!
WE'RE REAL SIMILAR IN THAT REGARD!
KWA-KWOOM!
OF COURSE, THAT STRATEGY HAS ITS SHARE OF DISADVANTAGES!
THE THINKER'S HUMAN UNDERLINGS SERVED THEIR PURPOSE!
THEY WERE ONLY MEANT TO DISTRACT YOU UNTIL I ARRIVED!
TOO BAD THEIR LACK OF CONSCIOUSNESS...PREVENTS THEM FROM WITNESSING MY VICTORY!
NOT A PROBLEM, BUB!
I DOUBT THEY'LL MISS MUCH!
YOU PUZZLE ME, WOLVERINE--

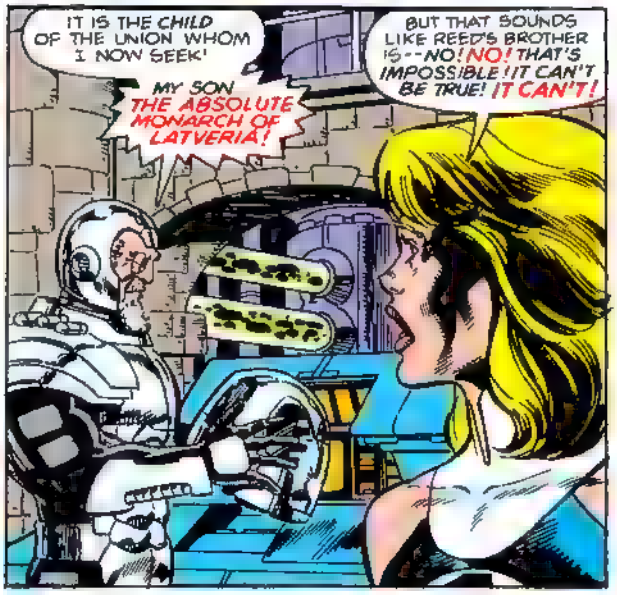
YOUR CLAWS APPEAR TO BE COMPOSED OF SKELETAL BONE INSTEAD OF THE ADAMANTIUM I WAS PROGRAMMED TO EXPECT!
LIFE IS JUST CHOCK-FULL OF LITTLE DISAPPOINTMENTS!
MAYBE I CAN MAKE IT UP TO YOU--
--BY GIVING YOU AN EARLY RETIREMENT!
CARELESS! FORGOT THIS CREEP IS AS PLIABLE AS MR FANTASTIC!
GRIP IS LIKE A STEEL VISE!
MY WORLD STARTS GRAYIN' AT THE EDGES AS HE CLAMPS DOWN ON ME. AND I START DEBATIN' THE MERITS OF A QUICK NAP
REALIZING THAT AIN'T THE WISEST CHOICE, I ELECT FOR A HEAD SHOT
GOT THE THING'S STRENGTH ALL RIGHT!
LUCKY ME!
...BUT THEN, SOMEBODY BEATS ME TO THE PUNCH .
PWA-TUNKK!
THE THINKER OUGHTTA ENROLL YOU IN A MEMORY COURSE, PAL!
IN CASE YA FORGOT, YOUR PRIMARY TARGET S SUPPOSED TO BE A CERTAIN BASHFUL, BLUE-EYED BUNDLE 'A JOY, AND-- HEY!
ENJOY YOUR MOMENTARY TRIUMPH, GRIMM... FOR YOU AND WOLVERINE ARE CERTAINLY DESTINED TO DIE!
THE THINKER HAS PLANNED FOR EVERY EVENTUALITY!
EVERY EVENTUALITY EXCEPT ME!
BUT HOW CAN I HELP THEM DEFEAT A SYNTHETIC CREATURE THAT CANNOT FEEL PAIN OR FEAR?!
HOW?!
HOW?!

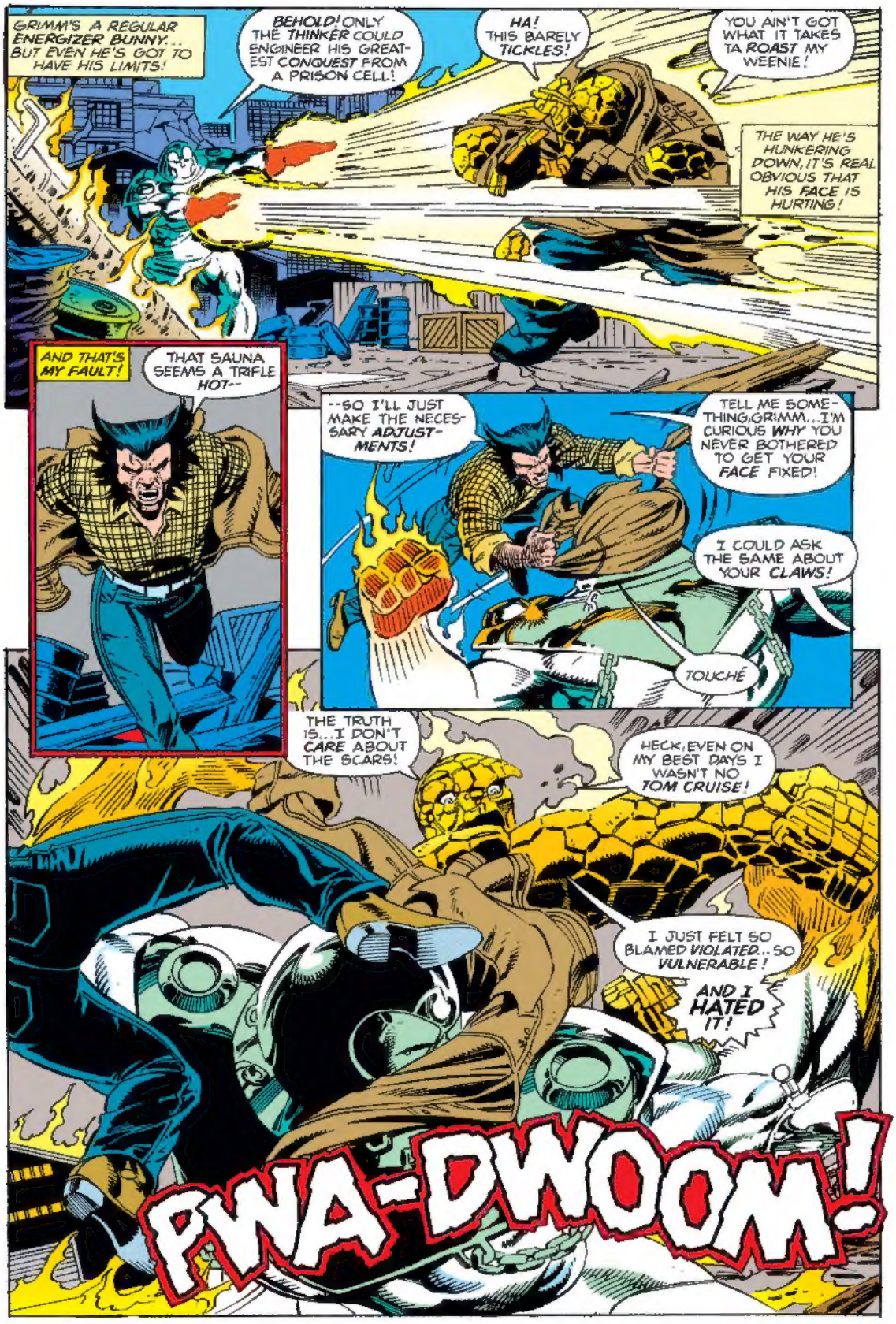

AND EVEN AS SCOTT LANG FRANTICALLY CONSIDERS HIS OPTIONS--!
NATHAN! I'VE WAITED LONG ENOUGH! I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION!
I THOUGHT THE FLAMING APPARITION WAS CONNECTED TO OUR RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH GALACTUS!*
IF I'M WRONG, BEN AND JOHNNY COULD BE IN SERIOUS DANGER!
CALM DOWN, SUSAN I WAS JUST ABOUT TO SUMMON YOU...
*OF COURSE SUE'S REFERRING TO OUR RECENT SAGA IN FF#387-#392.--Ralph-aration

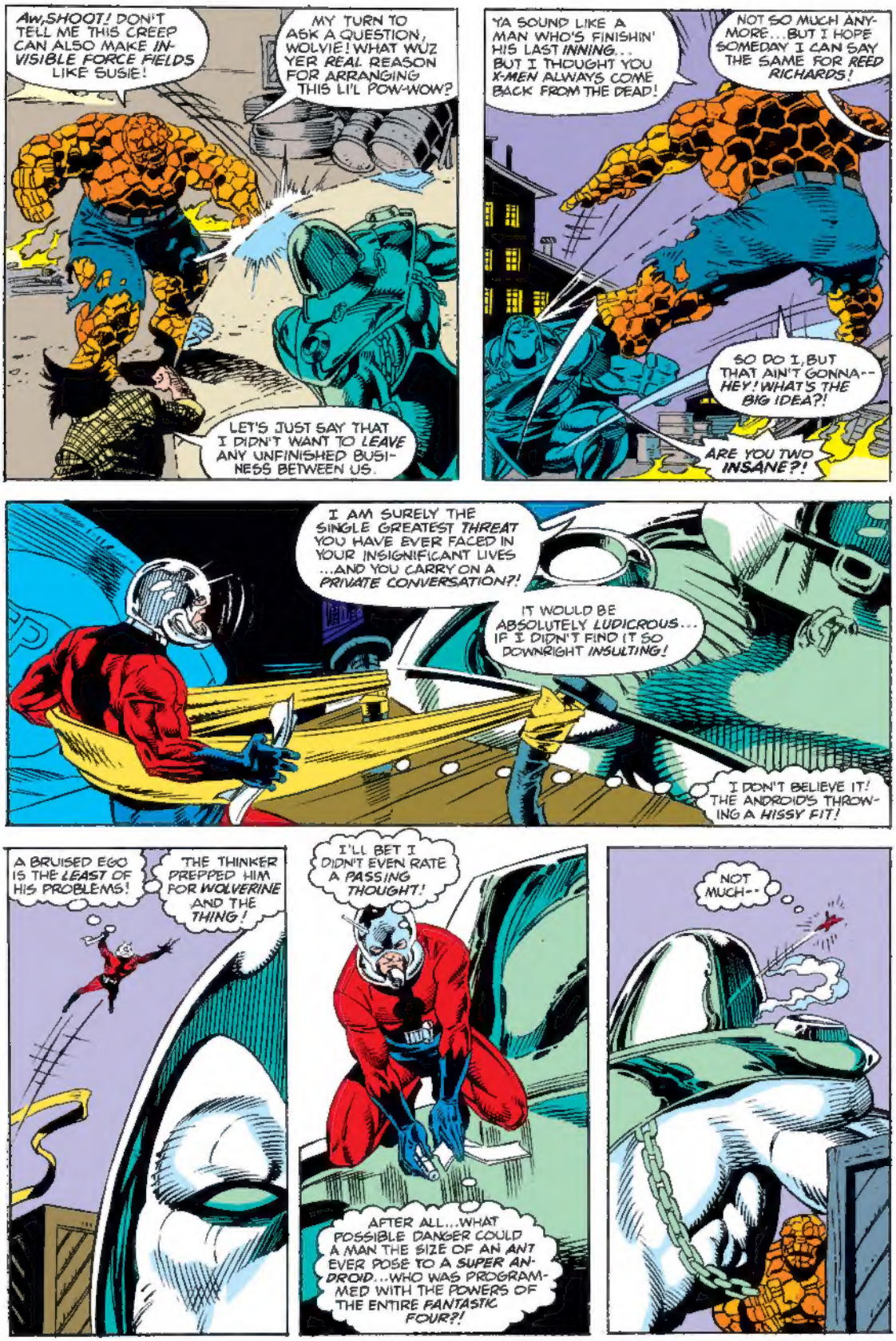
"QUITE SOME TIME AGO, ONE OF MY CAMPAIGNS WITHIN THE TIME-STREAM ENDED RATHER BADLY!"
"BARELY ON THE VERGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS...I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO MATERIALIZE BACK ON EARTH...WHERE I WAS FOUND BY A YOUNG GYPSY!"


'I OWE MY LIFE TO THAT WOMAN SHE TENDERLY NURSED ME BACK TO HEALTH EMPLOYING EXOTIC POTIONS AND SPELLS WHICH SOME PRIMITIVE MINDS MIGHT CONSIDER A FORM OF WITCHCRAFT!

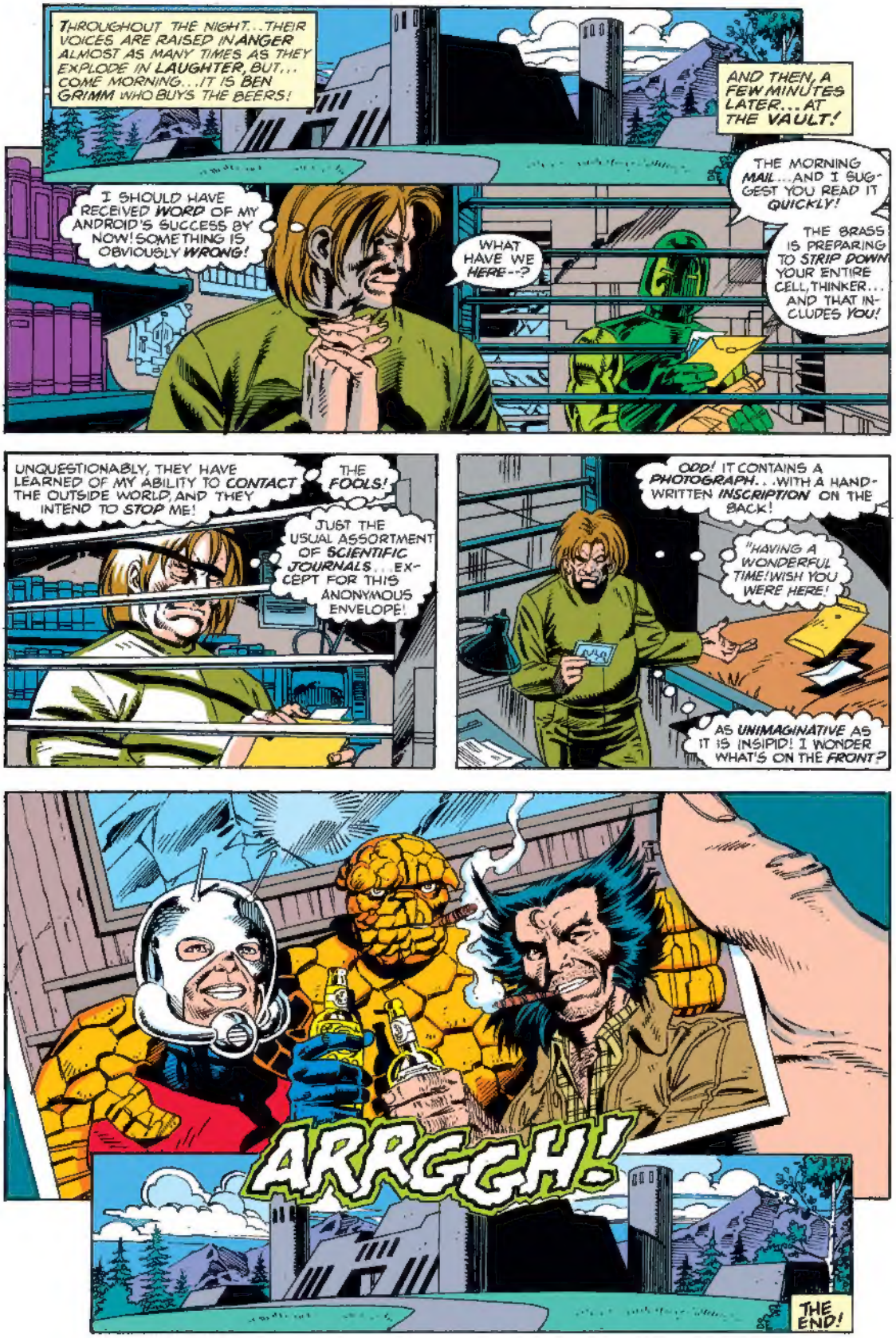
"AS TIME PASSED, WE GREW EVER CLOSER!"


IT IS THE CHILD OF THE UNION WHOM I NOW SEEK!
MY SON THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH OF LATVERIA!
BUT THAT SOUNDS LIKE REED'S BROTHER IS--NO! NO! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT CAN'T BE TRUE! IT CAN'T!


GRIMM'S A REGULAR ENERGIZER BUNNY... BUT EVEN HE'S GOT TO HAVE HIS LIMITS!
BEHOLD! ONLY THE THINKER COULD ENGINEER HIS GREATEST CONQUEST FROM A PRISON CELL!
HA! THIS BARELY TICKLES!
YOU AIN'T GOT WHAT IT TAKES TA ROAST MY WEENIE!
THE WAY HE'S HUNKERING DOWN, IT'S REAL OBVIOUS THAT HIS FACE IS HURTING!
AND THAT'S MY FAULT!
THAT SAUNA SEEMS A TRIFLE HOT--
--SO I'LL JUST MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS!
TELL ME SOMETHING, GRIMM... I'M CURIOUS WHY YOU NEVER BOTHERED TO GET YOUR FACE FIXED!
I COULD ASK THE SAME ABOUT YOUR CLAWS!
TOUCHÉ
THE TRUTH IS... I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE SCARS!
HECK, EVEN ON MY BEST DAYS I WASN'T NO TOM CRUISE!
I JUST FELT SO BLAMED VIOLATED... SO VULNERABLE!
AND I HATED IT!
PWA-DWOOM!


AW, SHOOT! DON'T TELL ME THIS CREEP CAN ALSO MAKE INVISIBLE FORCE FIELDS LIKE SUSIE!
MY TURN TO ASK A QUESTION, WOLVIE! WHAT WUZ YER REAL REASON FOR ARRANGING THIS LI'L POW-WOW?
LET'S JUST SAY THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE ANY UNFINISHED BUSINESS BETWEEN US.
YA SOUND LIKE A MAN WHO'S FINISHIN' HIS LAST INNING... BUT I THOUGHT YOU X-MEN ALWAYS COME BACK FROM THE DEAD!
NOT SO MUCH ANYMORE... BUT I HOPE SOMEDAY I CAN SAY THE SAME FOR REED RICHARDS!
SO DO I, BUT THAT AIN'T GONNA-- HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!
ARE YOU TWO INSANE?!
I AM SURELY THE SINGLE GREATEST THREAT YOU HAVE EVER FACED IN YOUR INSIGNIFICANT LIVES ...AND YOU CARRY ON A PRIVATE CONVERSATION?!
IT WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY LUDICROUS... IF I DIDN'T FIND IT SO DOWNRIGHT INSULTING!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THE ANDROID'S THROWING A HISSY FIT!
A BRUISED EGO IS THE LEAST OF HIS PROBLEMS!
THE THINKER PREPPED HIM FOR WOLVERINE AND THE THING!
I'LL BET I DIDN'T EVEN RATE A PASSING THOUGHT!
AFTER ALL...WHAT POSSIBLE DANGER COULD A MAN THE SIZE OF AN ANT EVER POSE TO A SUPER ANDROID...WHO WAS PROGRAMMED WITH THE POWERS OF THE ENTIRE FANTASTIC FOUR?!
NOT MUCH--

"...UNLESS HE CAME EQUIPPED WITH A SPARE CONTAINER OF SHRINK GAS!"
WHAT--WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?!
THE THINKER CLAIMED TO HAVE ANTICIPATED EVERY POSSIBILITY...AND PREPARED FOR ALL EVENTUALITIES!
HE OBVIOUSLY FAILED TO CONSIDER SOME UNKNOWN FACTOR!
I HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST SUCH AN ATTACK!
ABSOLUTELY NO DEFENSE!
THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT THE COMPANY YOU KEEP!
DO NOT MOCK ME, FOOLS! I HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED TO DESTROY YOU! NO MINOR SETBACK WILL DISSUADE ME!
PERSISTENT LIL CUSS...
...AIN'T HE?!
KER-PLASH!
PLINK!
LOOKS LIKE YER FINALLY GETTIN' THE HANG'A THIS BIZ, SCOTT!
NOW STAND ASIDE...WE STILL GOT US A FEW LOOSE ENDS!
WHOA! HASN'T THERE BEEN ENOUGH MINDLESS VIOLENCE FOR ONE DAY?
YEAH...AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE ONLY GOING TO TALK!
AND IN THE HOURS THAT FOLLOW, TALK THEY DO!


THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT...THEIR VOICES ARE RAISED IN ANGER ALMOST AS MANY TIMES AS THEY EXPLODE IN LAUGHTER, BUT... COME MORNING...IT IS BEN GRIMM WHO BUYS THE BEERS!
AND THEN, A FEW MINUTES LATER...AT THE VAULT!
I SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED WORD OF MY ANDROID'S SUCCESS BY NOW! SOMETHING IS OBVIOUSLY WRONG!
WHAT HAVE WE HERE--?
THE MORNING MAIL...AND I SUGGEST YOU READ IT QUICKLY!
THE BRASS IS PREPARING TO STRIP DOWN YOUR ENTIRE CELL, THINKER... AND THAT INCLUDES YOU!
UNQUESTIONABLY, THEY HAVE LEARNED OF MY ABILITY TO CONTACT THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AND THEY INTEND TO STOP ME!
THE FOOLS!
JUST THE USUAL ASSORTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS...EXCEPT FOR THIS ANONYMOUS ENVELOPE!
ODD! IT CONTAINS A PHOTOGRAPH...WITH A HANDWRITTEN INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK!
"HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME! WISH YOU WERE HERE!
AS UNIMAGINATIVE AS IT IS INSIPID! I WONDER WHAT'S ON THE FRONT?
ARRGGH!
THE END!